Conservation of wetlands in Kerala

2832. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to undertake an action plan for conservation of Ashtamudi-Sasthamcotha wetlands in Kerala;

(b) if so, the objects of the projects and by when it is likely to be completed;

(c) whether any fund has been released for the same; and

(d) the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) Two wetlands *viz* Ashtamudi and Sasthamkota have been identified from Kerala under National Wetlands Conservation Programme Management action plans at a total cost of Rs. 11.33 crore for Ashtamudi and Rs. 3.07 crore for Sasthamkota wetlands were received from the State Government for financial assistance. Amounts of Rs. 33.33 lakhs for Ashtamudi and Rs. 12.12 lakhs for Sasthamkota wetlands were released to State Government for catchment area treatment, fisheries development, pollution abatement, weed control, and people's participation during 2000-2001. Due to non-release of money to the implementing agencies by the State Government work could not be initiated and the entire amount had to be revalidated for next financial year.

The State Steering Committee, at its first meeting held on 25th March, 2002, decided to the fine tune the management plans through inputs of all the departments concerned, formulate a task force for advice and release funds to the District Collector for implementation of conservation measures.

Processing of fruits and vegetables

2833. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while India is one of the world's largest producers of fruits and vegetables, only two to four per cent of the total commercial horticulture produce of fruits and vegetables is